United Nations S/PV.8270

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8270th meeting
Tuesday, 29 May 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Czaputowicz	(Poland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djédjé
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Blok
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine; and Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Ambassador Apakan is joining today's meeting via video tele-conference from Minsk.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: The conflict in eastern Ukraine is now in its fifth year. It may no longer make international headlines, but it is neither dormant nor frozen. It is very much alive and requires our attention, in particular to alleviate the human cost.

Repeated pledges to respect the ceasefire have not stopped the fighting, far from it. While there has been an overall reduction of violence and casualties since 2015, the killing, destruction and immense suffering continues. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the civilian death toll of the conflict stands at more than 2,700, with up to 9,000 injured. An estimated 1.6 million people remain internally displaced — the largest uprooted population in Europe and among the 10 largest in the world.

Today's Council meeting is the first on the situation in Ukraine since 2 February 2017 (see S/PV.7876), when an upsurge in violence threatened to spiral out of control. In the intervening period, diplomatic talks have continued — in the Normandy format, the Trilateral Contact Group and through bilateral processes. Despite such commendable efforts, the security situation on the ground remains volatile, with the continued use of weapons proscribed by the Minsk agreements. The relative calm that held in the early weeks of 2018 was followed in April and May by a sharp increase in the number of victims.

The United Nations is deeply concerned about the recent deterioration of the situation at the contact line, including in the area around the Donetsk filtration station. We join the calls by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chief Monitor, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, on 18 May and by the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine, Ambassador Martin Sajdik, on 22 May for an immediate cessation of fighting. The violence puts civilian lives at risk and causes destruction of infrastructure, on which people depend for their basic needs on both sides of the contact line. In the light of recent reports of increased military preparedness along the contact line, we highlight the need for the utmost restraint.

On 17 February 2015, the Council adopted resolution 2202 (2015), which endorsed the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Council called on all parties to fully implement the package of measures, including a comprehensive ceasefire. The Minsk agreements remain the foundation for the international community's commitment to restoring peace in eastern Ukraine. Yet, more three years since the adoption of resolution 2202 (2015), the Minsk provisions remain largely unimplemented. Negotiations appear to have lost momentum, with the main stakeholders unable to reach agreement on key steps. Except for the exchange of detainees during the Christmas period last year, efforts to move the talks forward have achieved little so far. Practical solutions are often identified but not followed through. Meanwhile, discussions on a potential international peace operation have so far been inconclusive.

The United Nations continues to provide humanitarian assistance, human rights monitoring and development support, including in the framework of Ukraine's reform efforts. But the scale and urgency

of needs resulting from the conflict remain immense. There are more than half a million civilians living within five kilometres of the line of contact, subjected night and day to shelling, gunfire, landmines and unexploded ordnance. Children miss out on vital education. Health problems are worsening, with an increase in the number of cases of drug-resistant tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The area around the contact line is now the third most mine-contaminated area in the world. Residential areas, as well as critical infrastructure, are frequently shelled, deliberately or accidentally. We call on all concerned to take the necessary measures to protect civilians and to uphold international human rights obligations.

The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine continues to report on human rights violations and abuses carried out on both sides of the contact line. In accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the monitoring of the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sebastopol is being carried out, but with great difficulty due to a lack of access.

As a consequence of the conflict, eastern Ukraine is facing a serious humanitarian crisis. Restrictions and impediments on international humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas continue to limit aid delivery to those in need. With 3.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, we urge everyone to facilitate humanitarian access and encourage Member States to do more to support efforts to address the crisis. The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Ursula Mueller, will shortly report further on the humanitarian situation.

The conflict has also had a tragic impact on families from other nations. We are all aware of the recent update on the investigation into the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. In its resolution 2166 (2014) the Security Council demanded that all States cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability. As the Secretary-General has expressed, establishing the truth about that event is an important part of achieving justice for the victims and their families.

The United Nations strongly supports the lead efforts on Ukraine of the Normandy four, the Trilateral Contact Group, the OSCE and other key actors. The work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission takes place under extremely difficult circumstances. The Mission suffered its first fatality in April of last year. The United Nations calls for full respect for the OSCE Mission's freedom of movement and for an immediate end to all use of force and threats against its monitors. We look forward to hearing an update today from the Chief Monitor of the Mission, Ambassador Apakan.

The Secretary-General travelled to Kyiv early in his tenure to highlight the serious concern of the United Nations with regard to the situation in Ukraine and the plight of the people affected by the conflict. The visit in July 2017 demonstrated support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Secretary-General has consistently called for a demonstration of the necessary political will to cease hostilities and to end the suffering of the civilian population — a call he reiterated in his statement of 23 December 2017, on the eve of the so-called Christmas ceasefire. In his New Year message to the General Assembly this year, the Secretary-General also called for revitalizing relevant mediation initiatives in Europe, including the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group in Ukraine. We hope the intensification of diplomatic engagements in recent weeks will generate the necessary political impetus for progress in implementing the Minsk agreements and improving the prospects for a settlement of the conflict. To overcome the status quo, it is imperative to inject efforts with new political energy.

The Ukraine conflict is first and foremost a tragedy for the Ukrainian people, but it also takes place in a context of increasing challenges to the international peace and security framework. The conflict continues to test the credibility of international and regional organizations and erodes the trust Member States need to work together in the interest of the stability of Europe.

Despite the efforts to reach a settlement, a breakthrough remains elusive. We cannot allow ourselves to give in to fatigue or complacency. We must continue to pursue peace with renewed vigour and ensure the implementation of resolution 2202 (2015). In that regard, we reiterate our support for the lead efforts of the OSCE and the Normandy format. For its part, the United Nations remains committed to supporting the search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in a manner that fully upholds the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, in accordance with all the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Apakan.

Mr. Apakan: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the security situation in eastern Ukraine. I will also provide an update on the challenges in the implementation of the Minsk agreements, the impact on civilians and the longer-term consequences of the ongoing fighting.

Since January the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission has recorded over 100,000 ceasefire violations. Following a short pause in the level of violence during Easter, fighting increased again. Most of the fighting has remained concentrated in critical areas such as those around Svitlodarsk and Avdiivka, in the Donetsk region. Most of the kinetic activity recorded by the Special Monitoring Mission this year took place in those two hotspots. We also see that areas that have remained relatively calm thus far are at risk of further flare-ups, namely, Horlivka.

I am briefing from Minsk, where tomorrow, under the auspices of the Trilateral Contact Group, we will convene the Working Group on Security Issues. In that context, let me emphasize that there is an urgent need to agree on the additional measures that would make the ceasefire sustainable and irreversible. The disengagement of forces, which the sides agreed to complete under the September 2016 framework decision, has remained stalled. The lack of willingness to take the process further may erode the trust and the resolve of the sides.

Violence is indiscriminate. Since the beginning of the year, the Special Monitoring Mission has recorded the use of weapons and artillery, including multiple-launch rocket systems, tanks and mortars, on over 5,000 occasions. All those weapons should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk agreements. A renewed effort is needed in that regard. The withdrawal of heavy weapons — including from specific sectors — in phases and beginning with populated areas, should be a priority. Such deadly weapons are often placed in residential areas and cause destruction and casualties among civilians. The Special Monitoring Mission remains ready to monitor and verify the withdrawal process.

With regard to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, I would like to highlight the situation of the Donetsk filtration station. The functioning of this critical civilian infrastructure, which ensures drinkable water to the population of the area and beyond — over 300,000 people — is at risk. Ceasefire violations in the area have increased in recent weeks. Recently, employees of the station were wounded by gunfire. Since then the Mission has increased its presence in the area. New damage caused by shelling is exacerbating the deteriorating infrastructure, which requires regular maintenance and repair. Nevertheless, the Mission continues to facilitate dialogue on the ground with a view to establishing a window of silence that would allow that much needed repair work to take place.

The Special Monitoring Mission also continues to document the cost of the conflict and cases of casualties among civilians. Since the beginning of the year, the Special Monitoring Mission has corroborated the cases of 107 casualties among civilians. Most of those casualties were caused by either shelling incidents or mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. Most of them took place in April and May. In the report of the Mission published today, we described how a couple, an elderly man and two boys suffered as a result of the current violence. Mines and unexploded ordnance litter the areas close to the contact line. It will take years, probably decades, to fully decontaminate those areas. Yet, despite explicit agreements on mine action, the Mission observes that new mines are still being laid. As violence continues, the conflict is reshaping peoples' lives, creating an artificial divide between communities. Recently, representatives of a local women's group living close to the contact line in the Donetsk region shared their greatest sorrow with the Mission: they could no longer regularly visit their children living on the other side of the contact line. As long as the components for armed violence are still in place, the risk for escalation remains. We need political will for a renewed impetus. The people of Ukraine in and around the contact line are looking for a normal life, peace and stabilization.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the work of the members of the Special Monitoring Mission, the dedicated men and women with whom I have the honour to work. Their safety is our priority, and I have to note that, regretfully, threats to Mission personnel and assets, as well as restrictions on freedom of movement, continue, mostly in areas not controlled by the Government. The Special Monitoring Mission, an

unarmed civilian mission, will continue to implement its mandate with impartiality.

I wish to thank the Council once again for the opportunity to share the observations of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. I also wish to express my gratitude for the close cooperation with the United Nations agencies in Ukraine, both in Kyiv and in the field.

The President: I thank Mr. Apakan for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mueller.

Ms. Mueller: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

After four years, millions of civilians — men, women and children — continue to bear the brunt of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has become yet another protracted crisis. Over 2,700 civilians have been killed and up to 9,000 civilians have been injured since the outbreak of hostilities. The conflict-affected area is one of the most mine-contaminated areas in the world. Landmines maimed or killed 238 civilians in 2017.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documents 1 million crossings per month of the 457-kilometre contact line that divides eastern Ukraine. Civilians risk shelling, sniper fire and landmines as they make the arduous journey through the five official checkpoints, where processing time can range from hours to days.

I travelled across the contact line last year and spoke to people waiting in long lines at one of the checkpoints. Many of them were elderly. Ukraine has the highest proportion of elderly people affected by conflict in the world. They must cross the contact line every 60 days to register in the Government-controlled area as internally displaced persons (IDPs). It is the only way they can access their meagre pensions of $30 to $60 per month. I commend the Government of Ukraine for adopting a national IDP plan to address the situation of 1.5 million registered IDPs. The success of the plan requires a whole-of-Government approach and sufficient allocation of resources.

Last week before the Security Council, the Secretary-General and 80 States Members of the United Nations called for enhanced protection for civilians through adherence to the rules of war (see S/PV.8267). Those rules must be respected by all the parties to the conflict in Ukraine. Despite repeated appeals, water-treatment workers and facilities have been targeted on 34 occasions in 2018. The Donetsk filtration station, which supplies water to over 345,000 people, has come under fire eight times in the past 40 days, with five workers having been injured last month.

Over 600,000 people are regularly exposed to hostilities along the contact line. Families live in damp basements, and more than 100,000 children attend schools with windows lined with sand bags. More than 40,000 homes have been destroyed or damaged. Only 10 days ago, two schools in the Donetsk region were shelled when hundreds of children were attending classes.

Wars have limits. The parties to the conflict must take all feasible precautions to avoid and minimize civilian harm.

Humanitarians aim to reach 2.3 million people with vital assistance and protection services in 2018. However, we face immense access and funding challenges. We have received only 13 per cent of the $187 million that we appealed for in the humanitarian response plan, which has forced such agencies as the World Food Programme to withdraw from Ukraine, although 1.2 million people are food insecure.

The health situation is also severe. Millions of people have limited access to health care. Measles and hepatitis outbreaks are frequent. HIV/AIDS prevalence among pregnant women is unacceptably high. Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis often goes undetected or untreated. It is essential for patients to be able to access appropriate treatment.

After significant effort, I am pleased to inform the Council that the United Nations recently secured more humanitarian access in the non-Government-controlled area. We hope that will facilitate the scaling up the delivery of critically needed impartial, independent and neutral humanitarian aid to millions of people in need. I appeal for urgent funding to support those efforts.

This conflict has stretched millions of Ukrainians to the breaking point. Many displaced people have exhausted their savings and means of survival. In addition to the daily hostilities, they face such risks as trafficking, transactional sex, drug use and alcoholism. After four years, eastern Ukraine is now a protracted protection crisis, requiring an approach that addresses undeniable humanitarian needs while simultaneously

reinforcing resilience. Humanitarian and development actors are therefore seeking to apply a new way of working. The practical approach taken in Ukraine is already generating dividends.

Before I conclude, I once again call on all the parties to the conflict in Ukraine to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law. They must take constant care to spare civilians and critical civilian infrastructure. Finally, I urge the world to stand in solidarity with the millions of Ukrainians who urgently need our support. I also urge political leaders to make every effort to end the conflict. As I was constantly told by the Ukrainian men and women I met during my October 2017 visit, peace remains the only true solution to their dire humanitarian situation.

The President: I thank Ms. Mueller for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

To begin with, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ambassador Apakan and Assistant Secretary-General Mueller for their useful and comprehensive briefings.

This year marks the fourth anniversary of the Revolution of Dignity, which was sparked by the will of Ukrainian people to be part of a broader community based on democracy, the rule of law, a flourishing civil society and a well-founded market economy. That will and that spirit will not be broken, neither by the illegal annexation of Crimea nor by the conflict in the east of the country. Those who thought that it would misunderstood not only the Ukrainian soul but also basic rules of democracy. Ukraine and its people have responded to brute force and direct aggression from its neighbour with a tremendous effort to reshape and modernize the country. I congratulate His Excellency Minister Pavlo Klimkin, his country and his people on making that effort.

The Ukrainian conflict is lingering, and the world must not forget it. The aim of today's meeting is to discuss the situation in Ukraine and possible ways to end the protracted conflict. We believe it is vital that Ukraine be present on the United Nations agenda, and we should not forget the Security Council's primary responsibility, which is to maintain international peace and security, as stipulated in Chapter V, Article 24, of the Charter of the United Nations. That is a responsibility of all Security Council members — both permanent and elected.

It is civilians who are paying highest price for the conflict in eastern Ukraine. As was stated by the briefers, over 2,800 civilians have been killed and many thousands wounded in the conflict so far. A number of people have lost their homes. Over 1.5 million are internally displaced.

Civilians should be protected in line with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Humanitarian actors must have access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including the zones outside of the Ukrainian Government's control.

We see a systematic human rights violation in Crimea, in which non-governmental organization activists and indigenous Crimean Tatars are especially being targeted. There are also numerous cases of unlawful or arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and sexual violence in the area of conflict. Our utmost priority must be to stop those grave human rights violations.

We believe in the United Nations role to defend the human rights of civilians. In that regard, we commend the work of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the exchange of detainees in eastern Ukraine in December 2017. The human rights violations that have taken place have been duly reported in the High Commissioner's twenty-first report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine.

At this juncture, I would like to underline that the December 2017 General Assembly resolution on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sebastopol (resolution 72/190) recognizes that there is an international armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and condemns the retroactive application of the Russian legal system in the occupied territory and the imposition of automatic Russian citizenship on Ukrainian citizens. The resolution urges Russia to fully implement the order of the International Court of Justice on interim measures to restore the rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens on the peninsula and calls on the Russian occupation authorities to ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages. It also calls on Russia to allow the unimpeded entry to Crimea of international human rights monitoring bodies.

Humanitarian aid for Ukraine is a burning issue. Poland, along with its consistent support for Ukraine at the political level, has been providing humanitarian aid in the Kharkiv, Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions to internally displaced people from the affected areas. Polish support is not limited to immediate life-saving assistance. Our initiatives also seek to integrate internally displaced people with their host communities and to give them an opportunity to function independently. I would like to express my appreciation for the work of the European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine. For over three years, the Mission has assisted the Ukrainian authorities in advancing a sustainable reform of the civilian security sector through strategic advice and practical support. Our goal is to make the civilian security sector efficient, accountable and trustworthy.

International law has an important role to play as well. During the Council's 17 May open debate on upholding international law (see S/PV.8262), the President of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, stressed that only international law, its observance and enforcement can ensure peace and security. Unfortunately, international law is being violated in the case of Ukraine. Russia's belligerent behaviour against a sovereign country and its illegal annexation of Crimea are glaring examples of flouting the basic principles and rules of international law embedded in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the Budapest Memorandum. Moreover, the recognition of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is in itself a violation of international law, as it constitutes an attempt to legalize an unlawful situation.

Another breach of international law is the construction of the Kerch Strait Bridge, carried out by the Russian Federation without the permission of the Ukrainian State and contrary to the position adopted by the General Assembly in 2014 resolution 68/262, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Despite the steps taken by the international community so far, the military situation in eastern Ukraine remains very tense. The Minsk agreements require an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy military equipment in order to create a security zone. However, the agreements have been not honoured and have not prevented continuous fighting and the regular use of heavy weapons that severely disrupt the everyday life of the local population.

Russia itself is a signatory to the Minsk agreements, but its actions on the ground undercut the diplomatic efforts to settle the conflict. It continues to finance, arm and train the militants. Russia is continuously and directly engaged in the fight — as we were reminded again by recent news on Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, shot down over the territory of eastern Ukraine in July 2014, resulting in the deaths of almost 300 people.

On 24 May, the Joint Investigation Team revealed that the missile launcher used to shoot down the plane came from the fifty-third anti-aircraft missile brigade of the Russian Armed Forces. We welcome the recent findings of the Joint Investigation Team as highly professional, impartial and independent. We reaffirm our support for resolution 2166 (2014) and call on all States to cooperate fully to meet its objectives. We also call on Russia to accept its responsibility in the matter and cooperate fully with the process.

We believe Russia should walk back all moves that contravene the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Russia should use its influence over the militants in order for them to observe the ceasefire. It should withdraw heavy weapons, in accordance with the Minsk agreements, and allow the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the local population. Solutions to settle the conflict, such as the Normandy format — made up of the representatives of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France — have not brought about the expected outcome.

We notice the positive role and appreciate the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), mainly through providing credible information to the international community and offering real assistance and services to the conflict-affected population. The Mission is made up of more than 700 people from 44 countries — thereby making it the largest and the most expensive OSCE mission ever. Poland has seconded 40 experts to the Special Monitoring Mission and will do its utmost to support the further strengthening of the Mission.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Chief Monitor, Ambassador Apakan, for his dedication and tireless efforts towards conflict resolution. The Mission has continued to function despite the numerous cases of intimidation and attacks it endures. At this juncture, we urge Russia to return to the Joint Centre for Control

and Coordination, which used to be an effective tool in increasing the security of the Mission.

What should be the role of the United Nations be in this conflict? Given the stalemate in the political negotiations and the prolonged suffering of the local population, the United Nations should strive for the deployment of a fully fledged United Nations-mandated peacekeeping mission to the conflict zone. In that connection, we highly value the efforts of Ambassador Kurt Volker, United States Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations.

The Mission's mandate should ensure a sustainable de-escalation of conflict and the implementation of the Minsk agreements, facilitate the withdrawal of foreign armed formations, as well as supervise public order and the process of reintegration. The Mission should be able to effectively monitor the entire internationally recognized Russian-Ukrainian border and areas affected by the conflict, and to safeguard a secure environment to enable the holding of local elections.

We also call for the appointment of a United Nations Special Envoy for Ukraine. That would be tangible proof of United Nations engagement in conflict resolution and would give new momentum to the peace process. The Envoy could monitor and report on the activities of United Nations agencies and specialized organizations on the ground.

In conclusion, I reiterate that we believe that the efforts and dedication of the Ukrainian Government will allow ordinary Ukrainians to fulfil their ambitions and aspirations. Poland will continue to support Ukraine in order to facilitate that goal. We hope the rest of the world will do so as well.

We believe the Security Council has a role to play in that regard too. The ongoing violence in eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula remain one of the greatest sources of instability in the entire region. The Security Council should contribute to easing the tensions on the ground and working out a solution to the Ukrainian issue, including by establishing a peacekeeping mission and appointing a United Nations Special Envoy for Ukraine.

We have to remain engaged constructively and actively and foster our efforts in order to ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine in its internationally recognized borders.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Blok (Netherlands): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today. I would also like to thank the three excellent briefers. Their informative presentations highlight the ongoing need for international involvement, even four years since the start of the conflict. We have even seen a surge in violence in recent weeks, with new casualties as a result. That is why, Mr President, I am so grateful for your timely efforts to spotlight the situation in eastern Ukraine again today. The conflict must not be allowed to persist.

Four years of fighting in Donbas has inflicted a heavy toll on many parties.

First, it has taken a heavy toll on the people of Ukraine. More than 10,000 lives have been lost in that time. Many innocent civilians have had their daily lives disrupted; some lost their homes or became displaced. In parts of Donetsk and Luhansk, civilian infrastructure has been seriously damaged. The power and water supplies are insecure. Unexploded ordnance and mines are a daily threat.

Secondly, a toll is being taken on the young Ukrainian democracy. We admire the steps taken by the current Ukrainian Government towards reform, as well as the positive role played by Ukraine's vibrant civil society. But the conflict has put pressure on that young democracy and its economy. We call on the Government to continue its reforms, and we will continue to support the Ukrainian Government in its efforts bilaterally, through the European Union and in other international institutions.

Thirdly, as I said in this same Chamber two weeks ago, this conflict is taking a toll on the international legal order (see S/PV.8262). In Ukraine, we find that our international rulebook is in jeopardy. The illegal annexation of Crimea and the active, destabilizing role of Russia in Donbas go directly against Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations: the prohibition of the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. Like others, I therefore reiterate our strong commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

As the Council is well aware, it is not only the people of Ukraine who have been affected by the conflict. On 17 July 2014, 298 innocent people from 17 different countries were dragged into this conflict and lost their lives. On that fateful day, a Malaysia Airlines civilian airliner travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down over eastern Ukraine from a location controlled by Russian-backed separatists. One hundred and ninety-six of those victims were citizens of the Netherlands — men, women and children from my country.

The Security Council responded immediately, with the unanimous adoption of resolution 2166 (2014), proposed by Australia, which was one of the countries most affected. I also want to remind the Council that our efforts to establish an international tribunal under Chapter VII, through the Council, were blocked by a Russian veto.

My Government announced that it would not rest before the truth was established and justice was achieved, together with its international partners. Years of painstaking, independent international investigations followed. As a result, it has now been established that the missile that downed Flight MH-17 was launched by a Buk TELAR that came from the Russian Army. That conclusion was not taken lightly. It is the result of intensive, in-depth study and analysis.

Last Thursday, the Joint Investigation Team released additional findings — based on legally sound and compelling evidence — that the Buk missile system that downed Flight MH-17 belonged to the fifty-third anti-aircraft missile brigade of the Russian Army.

On that basis, and motivated by our desire to establish the truth and achieve justice and accountability, Australia and the Netherlands announced last Friday that we hold the Russian Federation accountable for its part in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

As a consequence, the Netherlands and Australia now call on the Russian Federation to engage seriously and constructively with us in this matter and accept its responsibility. Along with that, the Russian Federation needs to start cooperating fully with the Joint Investigation Team's ongoing criminal investigation.

That request is nothing new. Indeed, it is a clear demand set out in resolution 2166 (2014), which I have in front of me and which was unanimously adopted by the Council almost four years ago. By voting for that resolution, all 15 members of the Council, including the Russian Federation, voted for justice. They voted for those responsible to be held to account, and for all States to cooperate fully with efforts to establish accountability. Unfortunately, four years later, those demands need to be repeated. I reiterate them yet again today, supported by a massive amount of irrefutable evidence.

When it comes to establishing truth and accountability for what happened to Flight MH-17, no State has the right to remain silent. Quite the contrary: all States have a duty to cooperate constructively, to shed light on the truth and not to obscure it with continuous mist. I call on the Russian Federation to take that responsibility.

For our part, we have kept the Council informed of our efforts and findings on a regular basis, and we will continue to do so. We are grateful for the broad support that we have enjoued throughout from the vast majority of the international community, including from Australia, the United Nations Secretary-General, the NATO Secretary General, all our European partners and countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Ukraine, Malaysia and the United States.

In conclusion, the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 is a stark reminder of how an armed conflict in any part of the world can impact any of us, at any time. That is another reason why the international community cannot allow this conflict to persist. After four years of devastation, Ukraine deserves peace, lasting peace, on the basis of the Minsk agreements, supported by all of its neighbours and in accordance with international law. So too, do the victims of Flight MH-17 deserve justice.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by welcoming the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Ukraine and the Netherlands. I would also like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine; and Ms. Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their comprehensive and detailed briefings on the political situation in Ukraine.

The conflict in Ukraine is entering its fifth year. Ongoing ceasefire violations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are a source of concern for us, as

they could spark tensions and cause the situation to deteriorate as a result of escalating violence in the east of the country. That, in turn, would undermine the efforts of the international community, including those of the Security Council, to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The challenging work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to maintain the ceasefire and reduce tensions requires the cooperation and efforts of the parties to the conflict. Their cooperation is essential to achieving a peaceful political solution to the crisis. We therefore call for an immediate ceasefire and request that both parties respect the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, as endorsed by resolution 2202 (2015), as the only path to stability in Ukraine.

The impact of the violence and instability on the civilian population caused by the prolonged conflict is another source of concern. It generates economic losses in the region and exacerbates the suffering of the people, forcing some of them to leave their homes. We thank the humanitarian organizations for their work on the ground, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and her team for their support and efforts in the region to provide assistance to those who need it most. We call upon the parties to the conflict to facilitate safe access for humanitarian workers on the ground to enable them to provide assistance to those in need and to improve people's living conditions. Failing to do so would constitute a serious breach of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

In conclusion, we believe that the solution to the crisis is a peaceful one alone and that it can be achieved through direct, earnest and inclusive negotiations. The goal must be a definitive and just solution that attempts to foster harmonious relations among the various ethnic groups in Ukraine and between Ukraine and countries of the region. The solution to the crisis in Ukraine is not a military one; it is a political one. The international community must therefore continue to support all diplomatic efforts for a political solution to the crisis.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Polish presidency of the Security Council through you, Mr. Minister, for convening today's important public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Ukraine. Let me also welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Ukraine.

I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Ursula Mueller; and the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, for their very insightful briefings.

Given that French and German authorities are committed to resolving the crisis, I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of France and Germany. This joint statement, which is quite extraordinary, demonstrates the strong commitment of both countries within the framework of the Normandy format.

As we mark the one hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War this year, eastern Ukraine has been ravaged for more than four years by a conflict of an intensity rarely seen in Europe. More than 70 years after the Second World War, in a conflict in which both Ukraine and Russia paid an extraordinarily high price, more than 10,000 civilians and military personnel have lost their lives, millions of people have been displaced and millions more have been affected by clashes in the Donbas region.

For four years Germany and France have spared no effort to ease the suffering of those concerned and to put an end to the conflict. Following the Minsk protocol, the Minsk agreements were drafted in 2015 under the Normandy format and specify steps to end the crisis. Three years after the adoption of resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, now more than ever before, we call upon all parties to honour their commitments. We also recall our full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Against that backdrop, we would like to underscore three points.

The first point pertains to the security situation, which is a precondition for improving the plight of the civilian population. By no means a frozen conflict, although the parties have promised to silence their weapons on several occasions, including as recently as 30 March, eastern Ukraine is the site of daily clashes. Hundreds of ceasefire violations are observed every day by the OSCE. We pay tribute to that organization for its excellent work and for the risks its team faces. We implore the parties, in particular Russia, to do

their utmost to facilitate the freedom of movement of observers and to ensure their safety and that of their equipment, including drones.

France and Germany condemn all ceasefire violations in the strongest terms. We once again call for the withdrawal of heavy weaponry, which is again being employed for attacks against civilian infrastructure. It is unacceptable that schools continue to be the targets of shelling. Both parties must also make headway on the disengagement of forces along the contact line in areas already identified as present or future disengagement areas. Those first steps will create a climate of trust and prevent the occurrence of another tragic event similar to the one that occurred on 17 July 2014 when the 298 passengers and flight crew of Malaysia Flight Airlines MH-17 tragically lost their lives after the plane was shot down by a missile. We commend the professionalism of the Joint Investigation Team, whose work is fully independent. In order to shed light on the tragedy and bring those responsible to justice, it is crucial that investigators have the full cooperation of all Member States.

Our second point refers to the urgent humanitarian situation. In April alone, we recorded 23 fatalities, including five civilians, and 115 injuries. May's death toll already exceeds April's. During the harsh winter months, hundreds of thousands of people went without water, electricity and heat for more than a day. They also faced worsening food insecurity and deteriorating health, in particular women and children. In order to ease the suffering of the civilian population, Germany and France request that humanitarian workers be granted access to the Donbas region and that their safety be guaranteed. We implore all parties to protect key civilian infrastructure, such as the Donetsk filtration station, and to open additional checkpoints along the contact line. We encourage another exchange of prisoners, which would convey trust, which all of us want.

Lastly, a long-term solution to the crisis also depends on the political and economic measures that will be taken. Considerable progress has been made by Ukrainian authorities over the past three years in the implementation of the political commitments made under the Minsk agreements. Legislative arrangements must still be finalized to enable the holding of local elections in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk and the development of a plan to ensure they are held in the best possible conditions. It is expected that specific measures will be taken to improve the lives of people in the Donbas region — for example, by guaranteeing the right to a pension or by dispatching a team of experts on environmental issues.

France and Germany will continue to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people who have been battered in recent years by the conflict in Donbas and the illegal annexation of Crimea. Our efforts within the framework of the Normandy format are an expression of our desire to succeed in alleviating the suffering of the Ukrainian people and to lay the foundation for lasting peace throughout the European continent.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We should like to express our thanks for the convening of this meeting, and we welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Jacek Czaputowicz. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Polish presidency on its work during this month. We should also like to express our gratitude for the briefings of Mr. Ertuğrul Apakan, and Ms. Ursula Mueller, and of Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, who we believe will successfully fulfil her new duties at the head of the Department of Political Affairs.

We also welcome the participation of Mr. Stephanus Blok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and of Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. We reiterate our commitment to defending the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

Peru has been following with concern the complex and unstable situation in eastern Ukraine, as well as its serious implications for the country's governance and development and for regional stability. The civilian population has endured deplorable suffering. In four years of conflict, more than 2,500 civilians have lost their lives, and 9,000 civilians have been injured. More than 4.4 million people are in dire need of humanitarian aid, of which more than 1.6 million are internally displaced.

We must condemn the use of anti-personnel mines, which are banned under the Ottawa Convention, as well as the downing of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, for which we must ensure proper accountability.

Peru stresses that the Minsk agreements constitute the legal basis for the political solution required to end the conflict experienced in eastern Ukraine. In that

regard, we support the package of measures for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which the Council endorsed in February 2015.

We reiterate the need to comply with the ceasefire agreed by the parties and supported by the Council, as well as the withdrawal of heavy artillery, often located near populated areas. It is alarming that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has recorded more than 80,000 violations of the ceasefire, many with weapons that should have been withdrawn, in just the past three and a half months.

We highlight the work of the Special Mission and the need to facilitate its safe access on the ground. In line with the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, we would also like to welcome efforts to facilitate dialogue between the parties, in particular within the framework of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group.

I should like to conclude by welcoming the assistance that the international community, in particular the United Nations, lends in support of the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to alleviate the suffering of the conflict-affected civilian population and to build sustainable peace.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the briefers for their excellent input in today's discussion. I should like to express our appreciation to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and of Ukraine for being present here today. We very much welcome this opportunity to discuss the situation in eastern Ukraine, and we want to thank the Polish presidency for scheduling this very important briefing.

The redrawing of borders — backed by military power — as we have seen not only in Ukraine but also in Georgia, represents a threat that goes beyond Europe. When a State decides to challenge the international legal order and the Charter of the United Nations as such, it constitutes a threat to us all. Security is not a zero-sum game, and the rules-based order can function only when everyone adheres to the rules.

We are deeply concerned over the recent escalation of violence and the deteriorating humanitarian and human-rights situation in Donbas. Casualties, heavy shelling, damaged critical infrastructure and imminent environmental disasters underline how civilians are bearing the heaviest burden. Almost 3.5 million people are now affected by conflict and need humanitarian assistance. The thousands of Ukrainians living along the contact line are in particular need. It is crucial that humanitarian actors be given full, safe and unhindered access to people in need of humanitarian assistance, as has been stated by many around the table today.

We call for an immediate and full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and we support efforts within the Normandy format to that end. Our full support for those efforts does not alter the fact that Russia's continuous aggression against Ukraine is the origin of the conflict, and that Russia has the influence to end it whenever it so chooses. The withdrawal of foreign armed formations, military equipment and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, as well as the restoration of Ukrainian control over its State border, remain crucial.

Sweden will welcome, and be ready to contribute to, a possible United Nations mission in Donbas. However, such a mission must, from the outset, cover the entire occupied area of Ukraine, including the Russia-Ukraine border, and have as its clear aim the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We strongly support the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. It is unacceptable that the Mission's monitors continue to be intimidated, denied access and to have their equipment destroyed, primarily in areas held by Russian-backed armed groups. We call on Russia to use its influence over the armed groups it supports to ensure the Special Monitoring Mission's full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine, including along the Russia-Ukraine State border and to the Crimean peninsula.

The recent holding of presidential elections in illegally annexed Crimea and the inauguration of the Kerch Bridge, connecting the peninsula to mainland Russia, constitute clear breaches of international law. The European Union and Sweden will continue to remain firm in applying a non-recognition policy regarding Crimea, including through sanctions.

Human-rights monitors consistently report on the deteriorating human-rights situation in Crimea, where torture, kidnapping and house searches have become commonplace. Full, free and unrestricted access for international human-rights actors to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea, continues to be paramount. We welcome the yearly General

Assembly resolution on the situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sebastopol, Ukraine, and its bold support.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands reminded us today, 298 human lives were lost in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. That was a heinous crime that constitutes an unacceptable violation of international law. On 24 May the independent and impartial Joint Investigation Team concluded beyond doubt that the BUK missile system used to bring down the flight belonged to the armed forces of the Russian Federation, based in Kursk. We condemn that tragedy and call upon the Russian Federation to accept its responsibility to cooperate fully with the ongoing international criminal investigation in order to establish accountability and to provide full reparations for the injury caused by those unlawful acts. We reiterate our support for resolution 2166 (2014).

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I join other colleagues in welcoming the three Ministers for Foreign Affairs to this important meeting. I should also like to thank the briefers from the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for their account and for the work they and their teams do on the ground. The United Kingdom joins others in welcoming this opportunity for the Security Council to receive an update on the situation in eastern Ukraine. As other speakers have done, we also stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

The fighting in eastern Ukraine has continued unabated since 2014. The Under-Secretary-General set out some compelling facts about what is happening on the ground. But, for me, one of the most shocking facts was that there have been over 100,000 violations of the ceasefire. That is 100,000 too many, but 100,000 is an extremely large number. We should just think about what that really means for the people on the ground.

Not only the conflict but also the resulting humanitarian situation, as the Assistant Secretary-General said, and the potential for long-term environmental damage are among the many reasons that the topic of Ukraine needs to be on the Council's agenda and to be repeatedly discussed here. It is not just about Ukraine, although that is the subject of today's meeting. I want to express my agreement with what my Swedish colleague said about Ukraine, Georgia and the rules-based international order.

The situation on the ground remains highly volatile, as we heard. The deterioration in the security situation along the line of contact in Donetsk serves to underline the total failure of the latest recommitment to the ceasefire. I join others in repeating the appeals for respect for the laws of war. Despite being agreed by the Trilateral Contact Group on 26 March, it was only 10 minutes before Russian-led forces shelled Avdiivka, and they did so with weapons proscribed under the Minsk agreements. I think that demonstrates the complete disregard that the Russian-backed separatists have for the ceasefire and for attempts to grant some relief to the civilian population of eastern Ukraine. I would like to once again urge all those involved to recommit to the ceasefire at the Trilateral Contact Group meeting to take place on 30 May.

The United Kingdom also remains extremely concerned by the threats posed to civilian infrastructure and the potential for long-term environmental damage. Many speakers today highlighted the Donetsk water-filtration station, and I would like to add our voices to that point. We are also concerned by the threats from the separatists to turn off the pumps at the Yunkom mine. Flooding of the mine risks contaminating the water table with radiological waste. More generally, I would like to urge Russia to intervene with the separatists to avoid actions that would cause environmental damage and which could have a huge humanitarian impact on the civilian population for years to come. Support and respect for the safe zones around key civilian infrastructure is crucial if we are to prevent further humanitarian suffering.

And let us not see repeated the past winter, where despite international humanitarian assistance, as the Assistant Secretary-General said, food insecurity doubled from 600,000 to 1.2 million people.

A number of speakers mentioned Crimea. We share the view that the annexation of Crimea four years ago by Russia is illegal and in violation of the first principle of international law. General Assembly resolutions 68/262, 71/205 and 72/190 reaffirm the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and the absence of any legal basis to change the status of Crimea. The resolutions characterize Russia as an occupying Power. They note the primary responsibility of States to promote and protect human rights. And they call on Russia to uphold all of its obligations under applicable international law. Despite that, Russia continues to ignore calls in the General Assembly for the Office

of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Crimea, most recently in December last year.

We heard from the OSCE and the United Nations how millions of Crimeans remain outside the monitoring mechanisms of the United Nations, which means that there is no one who can easily help them. We call on Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to uphold the international rules-based system and respond positively to the General Assembly's calls.

I would now like to turn to Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17. I thank the Dutch Minister for his statement and for the important role the Dutch are playing, along with other members of the Joint Investigation Team, in pursuing justice for the victims and their families. Of the 298 victims, there were 10 British nationals. We commend the Joint Investigation Team for its professional, impartial and independent investigation.

Like other colleagues, my Foreign Secretary is on record as saying we now have clear evidence that the missile that brought down Flight MH-17 belonged to the Russian Army. The United Kingdom fully supports the Netherlands and Australia in their request to the Russian Federation to accept State responsibility for its part in bringing down Flight MH-17 and to engage with them in bilateral negotiations. All States Members of the United Nations, including Russia, need to fulfil their obligations under resolution 2166 (2014) to provide any requested assistance to the investigation.

Since 2014, over 10,300 people have been killed and 25,000 injured in Ukraine. Approximately 3.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, particularly along the line of contact. There are real risks of an environmental disaster. If Russia truly cares about the people of the Donbas, it should end the fighting that it started, withdraw its military personnel and weapons and cease support for the separatists, in line with its obligations under the Minsk agreements. And it should show political commitment, as Ambassador Apakan highlighted, to engage constructively and in good faith in negotiations to deliver long-term peace.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for the honour of presiding over our meeting today. I also welcome the presence of Mr. Stephanus Abraham Blok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and Mr. Pavlo Klimkin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, Assistant Secretary-General Ursula Mueller and Ambassador Apakan for their excellent briefings on the situation in Ukraine.

My country notes with regret the deterioration of the security situation in Ukraine. The recent upsurge in fighting along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine, which has resulted in the loss of human lives and the destruction of civilian infrastructure essential to the provision of basic social services to the population, is a challenge to the entire international community, and particularly to the Security Council. Above all, my delegation deplores the lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements, signed on 12 February 2015, including the recurrent violations of the ceasefire and the obstructions to the movement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission. These facts undeniably constitute major obstacles to the implementation of the agreements, which to date remains the appropriate framework for resolving the crisis in Ukraine.

Côte d'Ivoire, which is in favour of a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Ukraine, calls for respect for the ceasefire in force by the various parties involved, and above all for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, within the framework of the Normandy format. My country also supports the efforts of the OSCE Monitoring Mission and the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination to de-escalate the conflict. Against that backdrop, my delegation calls on the parties to the conflict to take all appropriate steps towards the easing of tensions, in particular by enabling the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination to play its role in supporting OSCE monitors and following up on the ceasefire agreements.

The humanitarian situation is also worrisome, given the resumption of fighting in eastern Ukraine since the beginning of May. The shelling has interrupted the gas and electricity distribution systems, affecting the living conditions of all of the people. Since the outbreak of the conflict, in 2014, civilians have suffered frequent water and electricity cuts around the line of contact and in internally displaced persons centres. On 18 April, 350,000 civilians had their water supply disrupted by damage to the Donetsk water filtration station. The station is still down and presents increased risks of contamination due to the numerous attacks to which it is subjected. My delegation condemns those acts, which constitute violations of international humanitarian law,

and urges the parties to the conflict to safeguard critical water infrastructure and the provision of basic social services, such as water, gas and electricity.

My country welcomes the efforts of the international community to fill the funding gap in the humanitarian response plan in eastern Ukraine, estimated at $186 million, to help the 2.3 million people in need of assistance in 2018.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its support for all efforts to find a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. To that end, it encourages all parties to respect the commitments they have undertaken with a view to ensure the effective implementation of the Minsk agreements and resolution 2202 (2015), of 17 February 2015, which supports those agreements.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and to commend you for presiding over it. We also welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Ursula Mueller, and the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Apakan, for their valuable briefings on the situation in eastern Ukraine.

In this statement we will focus on the political, security and humanitarian situations. On the political and security situations, we express our concern about the renewed fighting in eastern Ukraine, especially with reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission documenting a large number of violations of the ceasefire agreement, using weapons that should have been withdrawn according to the Minsk agreements. The presence of such weapons, in an environment marred by lack of confidence and insecurity, contributes to the escalation of violence.

Moreover, the Donetsk filtration station, which supplies drinking water to more than 300,000 people along both sides of the line of contact, is a case in point. In that regard, we call on all parties to immediately cease hostilities, fully abide by the ceasefire agreement and avoid any provocative acts that could lead to increased tension.

The State of Kuwait stresses the importance of respecting the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We hope that all parties will fully implement resolution 2202 (2015) and the Minsk agreements. The parties should also find a comprehensive and balanced solution to the crisis through dialogue, especially within the Normandy format. In that regard, we would like to commend the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for its efforts on the ground, particularly its endeavours to facilitate the dialogue between all parties to the crisis. We would also like to urge Ukraine and the Russian Federation to find a peaceful solution to the crisis and demonstrate greater political will, not only to uphold the ceasefire and implement previous commitments but also to relaunch comprehensive and sustainable negotiations.

With regard to the crime of the downing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, which claimed the lives of 298 innocent civilians, the State of Kuwait stresses the importance of abiding by resolution 2166 (2014), which calls for carrying out an international investigation according to the guidelines regulating international civil aviation. The resolution also demands that Member States cooperate fully with the efforts aimed at establishing accountability.

On the humanitarian situation, more than four years into a crisis that has led to the killing and injuring of thousands of people, there are still 1.6 million internally displaced persons, half of whom are elderly. They are facing tremendous challenges, including a shortage of food, medicine, heating, and education for their children. There are 3.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The shelling along the 457 kilometre-long line of contact adversely affects the people living in the area, 40 per cent of whom suffer daily and directly as a result of the shelling. Nearly 1 million people who cross the line of contact every month — an area known to be the most contaminated by landmines in the world. We emphasize the need for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to all conflict-affected areas in order to improve the living conditions of the people, especially in the light of the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait calls for finding a peaceful solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine, in line with Security Council resolutions and the agreements signed between the parties concerned, including the Minsk agreements. These agreements represent the

appropriate framework to settle the crisis in its regional dimension, and through mediation efforts by parties respected and recognized by both parties to the conflict and the international community at large.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Two weeks ago, the President of Poland convened a very important debate in the Security Council (see S/PV.8262) on upholding international law. Many of us talked about the purposes and goals of the United Nations. It was an opportunity to ask ourselves why we are here and what we hope to accomplish. Today's debate effectively answers those questions.

The conflict in Ukraine is a textbook example of the direct violation of the sovereignty of one Member State by another Member State. It is precisely the kind of flagrant misconduct this organ was created to address. When Russian forces entered the Crimean capital in 2014, it was a direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Russian forces seized the Parliament building and imposed an illegitimate referendum on the people. Since then, Russia has pushed into eastern Ukraine, creating a humanitarian crisis that threatens millions.

In response to the resulting outcry, Russia signed the Minsk agreements, committed to a ceasefire, committed to countless truces, committed to a withdrawal of heavy weapons and committed to monitors to guarantee all of its commitments. Unsurprisingly, Russia has serially disregarded all of those promises and it has permitted, if not instructed, its forces to detain, threaten and even shoot at monitors, their vehicles, cameras and observation drones. In short, Russia has created a catastrophe of suffering in Ukraine.

This is not a frozen conflict. The month of May has seen security conditions worsen, with the increased ceasefire violations, higher civilian casualties and growing military casualties. Adding to its complicity, the Kremlin has neglected every one of the dozens of previous ceasefire agreements. Russia insults our intelligence by telling us that this is a home-grown internal conflict, but everyone in this Chamber knows better. The militants in eastern Ukraine report directly to the Russian military, which arms them, trains them, leads them and fights alongside them. Russia's combined forces in eastern Ukraine include thousands of tanks, armoured vehicles and heavy artillery. Despite its transparent denials, there is no doubt that Russia is driving the Ukrainian conflict. How do we know? Because the Russian forces work hard to conceal who is directing their actions and paying their wages. They strip patches and insignia off of their uniforms and equipment. They hide their identities behind face masks. But we know why they are there and we know who sent them. Russian soldiers have been captured by Ukrainian armed forces. Journalists have identified numerous examples of Russian military equipment being used by Russian-led forces in eastern Ukraine.

Tragically, that includes the Russia-supplied missile system that shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 in July 2014 — a civilian aircraft flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur — killing all 298 people on board. The victims include nationals of our Security Council colleagues: 193 citizens of the Netherlands, 10 British citizens and a dual-national American, among others. The families of the victims deserve answers. We welcome last week's update from the international Joint Investigation Team, which has handled this case with professionalism and independence.

We strongly support the call of Australia and the Netherlands for Russia to acknowledge its role in the tragedy, to cooperate and bring to account those responsible for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

Like its role in the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 tragedy, we ask Russia to acknowledge another reality that everyone here knows to be true: Russian soldiers are in Ukraine, not to "protect Russian-speaking Ukrainian nationals", but to impose Russian control on the country. Let me emphasize that there is an urgent reason for making this request: the Russian Government holds the key to solving the crisis in Ukraine. The resolution of this conflict is not only possible; it is profoundly straightforward. Russia needs to withdraw its military forces and equipment, call on its proxies to honour the ceasefire and fulfil its commitments under the Minsk agreements.

In Crimea, Russia needs to withdraw from the peninsula and restore it to Ukrainian control in line with Moscow's multilateral and bilateral commitments. Russia can unilaterally fix this wrong, and the first step is acknowledging it. Until Russia ends its outrageous actions in Ukraine, the position of the United States will not waver. We condemn in the strongest terms Russia's involvement in eastern Ukraine and its purported annexation of Crimea.

Until Russia returns the Crimean peninsula to Ukrainian control, United States sanctions related to

the invasion of Crimea will continue. Until Russia pulls its forces out of eastern Ukraine and honours its Minsk commitments, our sanctions in response to its flagrant misconduct in the eastern part of the country will stay in place.

The United States, in close partnership with France, Germany and Ukraine, is weighing options to bring peace to eastern Ukraine. However, Russia has refused to engage meaningfully, and our efforts have been stalled since January.

On 23 April 2017, Joseph Stone — an American — was working as a paramedic in eastern Ukraine. He was serving with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in an area under Russian control. His vehicle was hit by an anti-tank mine. Joseph was killed. The tragedy of Joseph is joined by many others in Ukraine — we will not forget his sacrifice, just as Ukrainians will not forget the death and suffering of so many of their people.

All those who respect and are committed to defend the United Nations and its Charter must join us in demanding justice for Joseph and for all of the victims in Ukraine.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I express my appreciation to you, Sir, for presiding over this open meeting. I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Assistant Secretary-General Mueller and Ambassador Apakan, of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for their briefings.

China has been closely following the developments in eastern Ukraine. We are concerned about recent conflicts in the area causing civilian casualties. We have noted that the Minsk Tripartite Contact Group held consultations on the implementation of the Minsk agreements to promote a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian issue. While the international community continues to step up its mediation efforts, we call on both parties to the conflict to strictly abide by the ceasefire mechanism and stay the course to a political settlement.

In seeking a fundamental and long-term solution to the Ukrainian issue, it is necessary to take care of the legitimate rights and interests of all the regions and ethnic groups, as well as to address the legitimate concerns of all the relevant parties to balance their different interests. China believes that the Ukrainian issue involves a complicated historical genesis and reality and that the conflict needs to be addressed at its roots.

China has consistently maintained that all the parties concerned must fully implement resolution 2202 (2015). They must effectively cease all hostilities, fully implement the Minsk agreements and stay committed to seeking a comprehensive, lasting, balanced solution to the Ukrainian issue. That must be done through dialogue and consultation in order to take forward peace, stability and development in Ukraine and promote harmony among all ethnic groups in Ukraine, as well as to facilitate peaceful coexistence between Ukraine and the countries of the region.

The international community should continue to support the diplomatic efforts of all the relevant parties for the political settlement of the Ukrainian issue. Council discussions should be conducive to a genuine relaxation in the situation of the relevant regions in Ukraine and help move towards a proper solution to the Ukrainian issue.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for being here and presiding over our meeting. We also express our gratitude for the presence of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Ukraine. We also express our gratitude for the briefings provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo; the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Ursula Mueller.

We express our concern about the continued tension in the region and call upon all parties to cease hostilities immediately, abide by the ceasefire, allow unconditional humanitarian access and facilitate full and safe access for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine so that it can fully complete its monitoring tasks on the ground.

We see that, despite the joint statement on 2 March by the Trilateral Contact Group where the parties reaffirmed their full commitment to a sustainable and unlimited ceasefire from 5 March 2018 onwards, there was once again incompliance with that pledge. In that regard, we call for the parties to abide by the prohibition of the use of heavy weapons and to strictly

abide by resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses a package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. The Minsk agreements continue to be the basis upon which the international community has committed itself to seeking lasting peace in eastern Ukraine. All of this is in line with the Security Council press statement of 31 January 2017 (SC/12700). Likewise we call for them to abide by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to fully abide by international humanitarian law.

We believe that compliance with the stipulations of those agreements and the development of confidence-building measures are crucial to consolidate the efforts the parties must make to seek a political outcome to the crisis. In that regard, we call upon the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy quartet to resume the diplomatic process towards implementing the Minsk agreements.

Successive violations of the ceasefire have had a devastating effect on the lives of millions of civilians. According to statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 4 million people have been affected by the crisis, around 3 million of whom require humanitarian assistance. Moreover, attacks on urban areas and civilian infrastructure have affected 60 per cent of those living along the so-called contact line, which is 457 kilometres long and which is reportedly rapidly becoming one of the most mine-contaminated areas in the world. Such circumstances are exacerbated by harsh winter temperatures.

In that regard, we call on all parties to comply with resolution 2365 (2017), on anti-mine action, which urges all parties to armed conflicts to bring an immediate and definitive end to the indiscriminate to use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law. It also urges them to protect civilians, particularly children, from the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

Along the same lines, we call on the parties to strictly adhere to their obligations on the protection of civilians, including resolution 2286 (2016), in compliance with international humanitarian law. We strongly condemn any act of violence, attacks or threats against civilians, hospitals, schools, health-care facilities and water and energy infrastructure, as well as attacks against humanitarian personnel, including doctors, who are risking their lives to help civilians.

Furthermore, we commend the high-level meeting between the leaders of Russia and France on 24 May, where it was agreed to re-establish the joint working groups. We also applaud the meeting held between the leaders of Russia and Germany on 16 May to continue seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Likewise, we firmly support the endeavours of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, which is conducting important work in difficult circumstances. We encourage it to continue with its monitoring activities.

With regard to the possibility of creating a peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine, we believe it is imperative for the Security Council to remain united when establishing its mandate, if such a deployment were considered appropriate.

Finally, I wish to state that there can be no military solution to this conflict. The international community and the Council must make every effort to achieve a lasting peace, which will, in the long term, be beneficial for the region. Above all, it must be the parties who resolve their differences with the assistance of their regional organizations.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): My delegation welcomes you, Sir, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and of Ukraine to the Security Council. We express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, Ambassador Ertuğrul Apakan, as well as Assistant Secretary-General Ursula Mueller, for their comprehensive updates.

Kazakhstan expresses its concern about the unpredictable and volatile situation in eastern Ukraine and the frequent ceasefire violations, which have a direct impact on the civilian population. Those violations result in deaths and injuries, along with many humanitarian consequences.

The humanitarian situation in Donbas has worsened since the beginning of this month. We also note an increase in the use of heavy weapons, to the extent that more than 60 per cent of the people living along the contact line are affected by regular shelling. A considerable segment of the population does not have access to power, water or gas supplies. The deteriorating security situation in the wider area around the Donetsk filtration station poses a threat to the facility, its workers and monitors.

We also express sincere concern for the fate of youth, women and all vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons and refugees, half of whom are elderly.

In that regard, Kazakhstan reiterates strong support for the activities of United Nations agencies and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in the conflict area. We call for the immediate implementation by all sides of the framework decision on disengagement of the Trilateral Contact Group and welcome the results of its latest meeting, held in Minsk on 16 May. We also urge the parties involved to provide full, safe and unhindered access to the Special Monitoring Mission monitors in the conflict zone, which is an essential requirement as a confidence-building measure.

Bearing in mind that strong political will remains a key precondition in the process of settling the Ukrainian crisis, we believe that there is no other alternative to resolving the crisis except through strictly peaceful means. That should be based on observance by all participants of their obligations, strictly complying with resolution 2202 (2015), on the Minsk agreements.

We are also of the view that a further escalation of tensions should be prevented to avoid complicating the situation further. It is therefore necessary for all parties to withdraw their heavy weapons from the contact line. It is just as critical for United Nations agencies, regional organizations and the international community to stand ready to assist the population, support international mediation efforts and facilitate the negotiation process among all parties and their leaders, with a particular focus on revitalizing the Normandy format. All parties must therefore meet their obligations to provide free access to humanitarian assistance in the conflict zone.

Of equal importance is the economic recovery of the south-east of Ukraine. We therefore propose that confidence-building measures be introduced in the economic sphere so as to support greater social stability for the region.

Last week, the Joint Investigation Team presented its findings related to the investigation of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 over eastern Ukraine on 17 July 2014. We urge all the parties involved to pursue an objective, comprehensive and impartial investigation of the incident in accordance with the existing norms of international law and resolution 2166 (2014).

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We are very pleased to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over this important meeting. We also wish to welcome the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and of Ukraine. We thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Assistant Secretary-General Mueller and Chief Monitor Apakan for their respective briefings on the latest situation in eastern Ukraine.

We note the statement issued by the Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group seven days ago expressing concern on the recent surge in combat activity along the line of contact in eastern Ukraine.

We also understand the impact of the deteriorating security situation on civilians and critical infrastructure, and hence the need to respond to the humanitarian needs on the ground. We believe the implementation of the ceasefire regime, agreed to by the parties, is vital in de-escalating the increasing tension and helping address the needs of the civilian population. We also note the discussion on the possibility of deploying a peacekeeping mission, although there are major differences on the scope and mandate of the mission.

There is no doubt that the resolution of the situation in the eastern region of Ukraine can be achieved only through a peaceful settlement. That is why it is absolutely imperative that the parties remain fully committed to the implementation of the Minsk agreements and strictly adhere to resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

It has been a while since the parties met in the Normandy format. We believe that the holding of the Normandy quartet could facilitate important discussions on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and help tackle outstanding issues in that regard. We note the bilateral meetings held recently by the Russian Federation with France and with Germany at the highest level. We hope they will pave the way for the convening of the Normandy quartet soon.

Finally, on the issue of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, the continued cooperation of all States and actors in the region in bringing the matter to a conclusion remains extremely important, in line with resolution 2166 (2014), which the Council adopted unanimously. Let me end by saying that knowingly

downing a civilian aircraft is totally incomprehensible to us and is a truly terrible crime.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have listened attentively to my colleagues, and now I would like to ask them to listen to me and be patient. It has been some time since we discussed Ukraine and I am therefore doubly grateful to the Polish presidency for taking this initiative. I would also like to thank Ms. DiCarlo, Ms. Mueller and Mr. Apakan for their briefings.

Immediately after my statement we will hear the following: in February 2014, a revolution of honour took place in Ukraine. Let me point out, parenthetically, that one synonym for "revolution" is "coup d'état". Does that mean that in Kyiv they do in fact admit that what happened in Ukraine was a coup and a power grab? The statement will go on to say that Russia could not be reconciled to this and launched a war on Ukraine. Its troops are in Donbas. It has occupied Crimea. For all intents and purposes Russia is waging a third world war using hybrid methods. This is a battle of civilizations. A world of serfdom has challenged a world of freedom. Ukraine is on the front lines of this struggle between Muscovite barbarity and the civilized world. I could go on listing these pathetic propositions, but I will leave Mr. Klimkin the opportunity to expand on them.

The problem is that we are dealing with sellers of air. But to give it its due, the Kyiv propaganda machine has succeeded in painting a picture of an unfortunate, freedom-loving, peace-loving Ukraine, desperately fighting a perfidious, hating and hated Mordor. However, it has not done it on its own. It has been helped by its patrons in the West — who are all sitting here in this Chamber to my left and right. It is true, however, that they have recently begun to realize that there is something wrong with this picture, which is a painfully surreal one. Ukraine has declared that it is in a state of war with Russia, although who in the circumstances is the aggressor is not clear, considering that we are at war with no one. And yet no war footing has been declared, our embassies are functioning, a no-visa regime is in effect and millions of citizens of both countries mingle across our borders. They visit relatives, take trips to Russia for work, vacation in so-called occupied Crimea, conduct trade, do business and do not in any way experience hostility either from the so-called aggressor or the people who are its so-called victims.

The so-called revolution of honour — or rather coup — came about in order to overthrow the hated and corrupt Yanukovych regime. So where are we now? Are Ukrainians better off today? Kyiv's Western patrons are well aware of the horrifying level of corruption in Ukraine and the country's dire economic condition. But there is a panacea for that. Just blame Russia for all of Ukraine's ills, which is what is happening and usually in caricatured form. To take one example, before the UEFA Champions League final in Kyiv, a group of Ukrainian fans beat up some English supporters. Regrettably, that happens. There followed an explanation distinguished by its simplicity. It was a provocation by the Russian Federal Security Service, and the fans were Russians. Whatever happens in Ukraine, the universal theory is that it all leads to Russia.

My dear friends here are in deep, self-imposed isolation where information about what is going on in Ukraine is concerned. They consume the shibboleths and clichés dished up by the Western media and the doctrines of their Ukrainian clients. Have many of them done in-depth analyses of the social and political situation and the moral and psychological climate in Ukraine? Do they know the buckets of swill and loathing the Kyiv authorities shower on Russia, the lies they permit themselves and the malice they spew? But it is not just them. Does anyone here have an idea of the nonsense and fables that some Ukrainian media outlets disseminate about the situation in Crimea, the construction of the Crimean Bridge, the situation in Donbas, about Russia's motives and so-called intentions? No, they have no idea. But we certainly do.

Those media outlets that are willing to make up their own minds and hold undesirable world views, even if they are not pro-Russian or hostile, but simply in opposition, are steamrollered and shut down. On what pretext? Right. Because they are agents of the Kremlin. Independent and opposition journalists are killed and the crimes go uninvestigated. Literally just today the journalist and Russian citizen Arkady Babchenko was killed in Kyiv. It happened only a few hours ago. We can assume that the Ukrainian authorities will blame Russia for it, as they have done before more than once. Other journalists are fleeing the country to avoid persecution, and if they do not, they are arrested, like Kirill Vyshinsky, a Ukrainian citizen and head of RIA Novosti Ukraine. What was he accused of? High treason.

The level of schizophrenia in Ukraine is off the charts. Let me point out that schizophrenia is not an insult. It is a psychiatric condition in which the personality is split in two. Thanks to the efforts of its current leaders, Ukraine is living in two parallel universes, its fictional state of so-called hybrid war with Russia and the real world, where there is no Russian invasion. And it is essential to be able to strictly control the information space in order to ensure that reality cannot contradict or cross paths with the virtual world that the Ukrainian authorities have created. This schizophrenia now extends to their ideology. The authorities in Kyiv are creating a pantheon of new Ukrainian heroes, warriors for its independence. For lack of any others, they have exalted Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, leaders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which cooperated with the Nazis. No matter that as far as half the population of Ukraine is concerned they are not heroes but criminals and collaborators. The important thing is to have heroes who are anti-Russian. Our Polish presidency of the Council knows perfectly well what sort of people Bandera and Shukhevych were. Poles have their own scores to settle with these men. And they know the kind of organization OUN is — one that annihilated Jews, Poles and Russians during the war. Except that today they did not say anything about that. It is strictly for Poland's internal consumption. Talking about that kind of thing in this Chamber is simply inappropriate.

A state of lawlessness exists right now in Ukraine that would not be tolerated in any law-abiding State. But there it can be. And one can close one's eyes to it. The authorities in Kyiv are conducting an assault on basic human rights and freedoms, suppressing dissidents, using police-State methods, indulging the rise of extremist and neo-Nazist attitudes and working for the forced Ukrainization of the country.

In September 2017 a law on education came into effect aimed at eradicating the entire Russian-language education system, in contravention of Ukraine's obligations under the Minsk agreements. The law granting the right to use Russian at the regional level was repealed, ignoring the Venice Commission's recommendations on making adjustments to ensure the rights of national minorities. Kyiv's measures constitute linguistic cleansing, although it is a real stretch to call Russian a minority language in Ukraine. All of this goes against Ukraine's own Constitution and its international legal obligations, both universal and regional. I would like to point out that the language issue has been one of the most basic motives of events in Ukraine. But Kyiv is not about to learn from its mistakes.

The uncontrolled growth of nationalist and chauvinist sentiment in Ukraine is very worrying. Bandera's birthday is being observed with torchlight parades on a virtually State-wide scale. The victims of the nationalists' attacks include representatives of the media, television station offices and their owners' homes. On 9 May radicals attempted to burn down the INTER TV offices for broadcasting a concert in honour of Victory Day. Nationalist attacks continue on Ukrainian Orthodox churches and journalists. Here at United Nations Headquarters, on 9 May, after a seminar conducted by the Ukrainian Mission, which it attempted to pass off as an official Committee on Information event, Ukrainian participants in the so-called anti-terrorist operation, including so-called snipers, tried to physically threaten a Russian diplomat. An official representative of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought in the snipers, presented them as friends and later tried to depict the whole thing as Russian slander, lies and propaganda.

To this day there has been no investigation of the tragedy that took place in Odessa on 2 May 2014, when radicals burned more than 50 people alive in the House of Trade Unions. But today the leader of OUN speaks of it with pride. That is just a taste of the examples I could give. The whole thing is really much sadder. That is why the residents of Crimea decided that they no longer wished to live under such conditions and left this Ukraine. The inhabitants of Donbas have been less lucky. A different scenario unrolled there. And yet they did not ask for much. They wanted to have autonomy within a united Ukraine, to speak their native language and honour their own heroes rather than those imposed on them by Kyiv. What is absurd about that? Why is it possible somewhere in Belgium, where Walloons and Flemings live peacefully together, but not in Ukraine? God forbid that Belgium should endure such a scenario. I wish it all the best and continued peace and joy.

Has no one ever wondered why there have never been any protests in Donbas, large or small, against the local authorities, which Kyiv has labelled terrorists? And that is despite the fact that the people's life there is not at all easy, thanks to the Kyiv authorities, who have shown their generous concern and hypocrisy vis-à-vis their own population by imposing a trade and economic blockade on them. For some reason we hear nothing

about human rights violations in those areas or any demands for a speedy return to Kyiv's control. Maybe the answer is simply that those people do not want to live in that kind of Ukraine either. The Council either does not know whom it is dealing with or is deliberately turning a blind eye, because, unfortunately, some of its members have no need whatever of a settlement of the conflict in Ukraine. All they want is a hotbed of instability on Russia's borders and the satisfaction of schadenfreude at the tensions between two brother countries and peoples. But they are wrong if they imagine that this will last forever.

Many speakers today have rightly talked about the fact that the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, as affirmed in resolution 2202 (2015), represents the only possible foundation for a settlement. The phrase "Russia must fulfil the Minsk agreements" is now commonplace. But are many of those present in this Chamber familiar with the provisions of the Minsk agreements? Have they read them at all? Do they know by whom, how and in what sequence they should be implemented? If I may, I would like to remind them. There are 13 paragraphs in the package of measures.

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 concern the comprehensive ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons. Kyiv has not managed to achieve a durable ceasefire for three years and has ignored the truces declared by the Trilateral Contact Group. The Ukrainian forces' equipment is regularly missing from its storage areas and is used for shelling civilian targets in Donbas. Incidentally, I would like to tell my British colleague that the workers from the Donetsk filtration station, like the filtration station itself, were shelled from the Ukrainian side, not the militias'. According to data from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, since the beginning of this year five civilians have been killed and 33 injured in militia-controlled areas, whereas there has been one civilian injury on Government-controlled territories.

Kyiv has undermined and continues to sabotage the implementation of the framework agreement of 21 September 2016 on the disengagement of forces and hardware, despite the fact that the militias have regularly affirmed their willingness to abide by it. Ukrainian forces have regularly seized residential areas in the so-called grey zone, where such action is prohibited. The demining process has been obstructed and military preparations are fully under way. The Ukrainians are now conducting a military operation in Donbas with the so-called United Forces. Today, for some reason, exercises involving aviation support were conducted over Donbas. And a number of countries, instead of demanding that Kyiv fulfil its obligations, have begun supplying it with more arms. What kind of contribution to the implementation of the Minsk agreements is that?

Paragraph 4 concerns the dialogue on the modalities of local elections. Kyiv has no intention of getting into any kind of dialogue, ignoring the signatures of the Donetsk and Luhansk representatives on the Minsk agreements. Listening to Ukrainian politicians, one would think there are no people there at all, only terrorists. And yet there are 4 million Ukrainian citizens living in Donbas.

Paragraphs 5 and 6 concern pardons, amnesties and the release and exchange of all prisoners. In violation of the agreements, Kyiv has refused to enact through the Verkhovna Rada bills for amnesties for militias, although a similar procedure for participants in the Maidan riots in the winter of 2013 and 2014 was implemented. The militias have consistently declared their willingness to exchange prisoners on an all-for-all basis in accordance with the Minsk agreements, but Kyiv has persistently objected.

Paragraph 7 concerns safe humanitarian access. The problems that have accumulated in that regard, as Ms. Mueller mentioned, must be resolved within the framework of the regular meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. The main problem is Kyiv's unwillingness to hold a dialogue with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk. The result, essentially, is that today the residents of those regions can rely only on supplies from Russia, which is something else that we have been criticized for.

Paragraph 8 concerns the restoration of socioeconomic ties. Kyiv has imposed a full economic, transport and food blockade of Donbas, which is evidently how the Kyiv authorities are trying to ensure that the ordinary residents of south-eastern Ukraine return to their fold.

Paragraph 9 concerns the reinstatement of full control of the border. This is the point at which Kyiv and Washington start reading the package of measures. It states in black and white that this must take place "starting on day one after the local elections.... provided that paragraph 11 has been implemented". That concerns

"carrying out constitutional reform", which has so far not happened.

Only after that does paragraph 10 provide for the disarmament and withdrawal of illegal armed groups, by which Kyiv means militias and those mythical Russian troops, whose presence it asserts using various fakes. Let me once again disappoint some of those here today — there are no Russian troops in Donbas. Incidentally, the representative of the United States took a highly original approach today, lecturing us about Russia's violations of international law through its invasion of other countries. Those were the words of the representative of the United States, a country with a long and renowned history of invasions of sovereign States, including in very recent times.

The constitutional reform envisaged by paragraph 11 was supposed to be completed by the end of 2015. Its key elements call for decentralization and enacting legislation granting Donetsk and Luhansk special status. The Minsk provisions include residents' right to linguistic self-determination, broad self-governance and support for cross-border cooperation with Russia. Not only has none of this been implemented, it has essentially been erased by the law on the so-called reintegration of Donbas, which came into effect on 24 February and does not even mention the Minsk agreements.

Paragraph 12 concerns the holding of local elections in coordination with representatives of Luhansk and Donetsk. Needless to say, since Kyiv has rejected any dialogue, it is not being implemented either.

Paragraph 13 concerns the establishment of working groups on the implementation of relevant aspects of the Minsk agreements. Who should comply with the Minsk agreements, in the Council's opinion? Which of these paragraphs has to do with Moscow's obligations?

The Ukrainian leadership has stubbornly avoided meeting its obligations under the Minsk agreements on the political front. It has not ensured the adoption of permanent legislation on the special order for local self-government in Donbas and is sabotaging the implementation of the Steinmeier formula for its special status. The reason for Kyiv's sabotage of the Minsk agreements is simple. It does not want a settlement. Nor does it need Donbas. Why would it want several million anti-Government citizens on the eve of the 2019 presidential elections? The bankrupt Kiev authorities' ratings are at rock bottom. If they truly want a settlement, they have to negotiate with Donbas. That means that they will have to admit that this is an internal Ukrainian conflict and a fratricidal war. That is the naked truth. And that would be domestic and foreign policy suicide. Kiev does not possess the political will to implement the Minsk agreements and cannot afford to destroy the convenient paradigm it has created of Russian aggression and Russian-supported terrorists, which is so handy for hiding behind and getting support from the West. Because of that, we will continue to see Kyiv politicians enact their imitations of heated activity, theatrical performances and bombastic statements.

In 2015, the Security Council attempted to provide Ukraine with genuine international assistance to Ukraine. Resolution 2202 (2015) enshrined the Minsk package of measures as the international legal basis for a settlement that today still remains the only effective mechanism for a political way out of the situation. No one should be under the illusion that any decision can be viable without taking the will of the population of Donbas into account. It was to support the agreements between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk that we proposed considering the establishment of a peacekeeping operation. Unfortunately, instead of that we are seeing attempts to create some kind of alternative settlement format under United Nations auspices to replace the efforts of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the Normandy format and turn the Minsk package of measures on its head.

Nevertheless, the support that we have heard today for the Minsk agreements, which need only to be read correctly and implemented consistently, gives us hope that we will eventually succeed in achieving a settlement in this conflict-torn country, where those who suffer the most are ordinary Ukrainian citizens. Russia has a greater interest in seeing that succeed than anyone. That is why we would like to propose that the Council adopt a very short presidential statement. I will read it now, if I may.

> "The Security Council reaffirms unconditionally its resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, adopted and signed in Minsk on 12 February 2015.
>
> "The Security Council calls for ensuring the full, comprehensive and sequential implementation of the package of measures, including a comprehensive ceasefire, as provided for therein.

"The Security Council calls strongly for refraining from any steps or rhetoric that contradict the letter and spirit of resolution 2202 (2015)."

We hope that the Council will unanimously reaffirm its commitment to a peaceful settlement in Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk agreements.

I cannot avoid discussing a very important and sensitive issue. Many speakers today have mentioned the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 over eastern Ukraine in July 2014. We were very saddened by the incident and, like everyone else, have been hoping for an independent and impartial investigation. We did not intend to bring up the subject today, since it has no direct relation to the political settlement in Ukraine. But as long as the Joint Investigation Team has rushed through the latest portion of its comments, evidently to be in time for today's meeting, and some delegations in this Chamber, in their ignorance, have launched a new wave of anti-Russian sentiment, we have this to say.

Our attitude to the tragedy of four years ago has not changed in any way. Naturally we are outraged by this dreadful incident, mourn the victims and sympathize with their loved ones. We insist on the conduct of a credible investigation. The true perpetrators of the tragedy must be determined on the basis of reliable evidence and brought to justice. I would like to remind the Council that immediately following the tragedy, Russia spearheaded the adoption of resolution 2166 (2014), which demanded an international investigation and defined very clear criteria for it. Since the disaster, we have regularly provided the Dutch with all possible assistance and have unfailingly called for ensuring the investigation's transparency. The Office of Russia's Prosecutor General has always responded promptly and fully to appeals for the provision of legal assistance. We have declassified and passed on to the investigation the design data for the BUK missile system, and have provided the results of experiments conducted for this type of missile by Almaz-Antey, its manufacturer.

We also did what no one else has done. In October 2016, we passed on primary radar data, which is critically important to the investigation, since it cannot be forged. In particular, it completely excludes the possibility that the missile that hit the Boeing 777 came from militia-controlled territory, as the investigation insists. And yet the data was not even included in the results and I am asking why. How are we to understand the refusal of the Netherlands to give an assessment of the key circumstances of the tragedy, such as the fact that the Ukrainian authorities did not close the airspace over the zone of conflict to civil aviation or why nothing is said about Kyiv's radar data or information from the Ukrainian air traffic controllers?

I would like to remind the Council that so far the United States has not provided any satellite images, whose existence it announced immediately after the disaster. Instead of taking due account of the concrete, undeniable facts, the Joint Investigation Team is manipulating social network data whose authenticity cannot be verified. Moreover, even before the completion of the investigation, the Team launched a chain reaction of accusations about Russia in the spirit of Britain's "highly likely" phrase. The European investigators have continued to discredit themselves by making accusations before the investigation is complete. All of this testifies to an unwillingness to seriously engage in the investigation and confirms the ideological and political motives behind the search for the perpetrators. Instead of that, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands informed us about the flat-out demand by the Netherlands and Australia that Russia to acknowledge its guilt. I will refrain from commenting on the letter's content, and especially its tone, because I do not want to offend Holland's Foreign Minister. But I would like to once again remind the Council, in case anyone has forgotten, that nobody is permitted to use ultimatums when speaking to Russia.

We reaffirm our readiness to extend all possible assistance to a truly transparent and independent investigation. We cannot accept the groundless conclusions of the Joint Investigation Team. Considering the dirty tricks that some States are employing nowadays, we can trust only investigations in which Russia is a full participant.

The President: The representative of the Netherlands has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Blok (Netherlands): We have heard the remarks of the representative of the Russian Federation with regard to Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, but we actually heard nothing new. We are aware that Russia's spokespersons and State-controlled media routinely try to discredit details of the investigation, call into question the independence, professionalism and impartiality of the Joint Investigation Team and continue to spread impossible alternative theories about the downing of

Flight MH-17. For the relatives of the victims, that is extremely painful. It is very disappointing that even in this Chamber, Russia's representative has not acknowledged the hard facts that the Joint Investigation Team has established based on irrefutable evidence. So far, the Russian authorities have not shown the slightest interest in achieving truth, justice and accountability, as demanded by resolution 2166 (2014).

I would also like to remind the Council that our efforts to establish an international tribunal through the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations were blocked by a Russian veto. To us, that shows how important it is that Russia enter into bilateral talks with the Netherlands and Australia, since they are the proper forum in which to discuss Russia's responsibility for its part in the downing of Flight MH-17. We therefore urge the Russian Federation to accept our invitation to engage in such talks in relation to the State's responsibility for its part in the downing of Flight MH-17 on 17 July 2014.

Mr. Klimkin (Ukraine): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's briefing and for your personal dedication to countering Russia's aggression against my country. My appreciation also goes to the briefers for their important presentations. And needless to say, I want to thank other delegations for their strong expressions of solidarity and their united condemnation of the Kremlin's revanchist policies.

As the Russian representative began his statement, I thought he might have come to understand some important points, but as he started to reproduce Russian television's standard narrative, I realized that normal service had been resumed. I can therefore now continue with my statement, because we know all too well how everything started — with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We do not need to repeat those facts.

We all know that it is not only my compatriots whom the Russian troops on our territory are shooting and killing. Last week, Russia's role in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was clearly exposed by the investigators of the Joint Investigation Team. As we all knew, but for which we now have full proof, a Russian BUK missile system was brought from a military base near Kursk. It shot down a passenger airliner and then returned to Russia. I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands for his important statement in that regard. As it happens, Russia's reaction to the Joint Investigation Team's announcement did not surprise me at all. We have seen the same attitude where the chemical attacks in Syria and Salisbury are concerned. First Russia denies everything and spreads dozens of versions that have nothing to do with reality. Once caught red-handed, it refuses to recognize the conclusions of investigative bodies under the pretext that it is not part of the investigations. It also complains about the fact that none of its weird versions of events are taken into consideration. Essentially, none of this is new, and that is a very sad thing.

We have no doubt that the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was a terrorist act. By 12 June, Ukraine will have submitted a memorandum to the International Court of Justice with additional evidence of Russia's violations of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The perpetrators of this and other crimes will be brought to account and justice will be assured.

As we speak here today in this Chamber, violence continues to ravage Donbas. The conflict has left 4.4 million people in a very dire humanitarian situation, and the humanitarian cost continues to mount. People lack access to all basic services and goods. Everything — critical water, electricity and transport infrastructure — has been destroyed. The same goes for health facilities and services. Retired people are unable to receive their pensions, because the Government of Ukraine cannot reach them directly. They have to cross into Government-controlled areas of Ukraine to receive the money they are owed. Daily shellings and armed hostilities are a reality for more than 600,000 Ukrainians living on both sides of the contact line.

The area, according to the United Nations, has already become the most mine-contaminated stretch of land in the world. One of the starkest reminders of the cost of Russia's aggression came two weeks ago. On 18 May, the Russian occupation forces used 152mm calibre artillery to shell residential areas in the village of Troitske in the Luhansk region. Two civilians, one of whom was a child, lost their lives.

With regard to all the ramifications of the Russians' claim that they are not in Ukraine, I have a very simple illustration for the Security Council, a picture of Darya Kazemirova. Three days ago she turned 15, and just yesterday she was killed in the backyard of her house by a 122 mm shell, prohibited under the Minsk agreements and shot by Russian proxies. I would therefore like to ask the Russian representative if the shell is from the

so-called latest humanitarian convoy, if the Russian proxies bought heavy ammunition and weaponry at the local supermarket, of if they have been able to manufacture reproductions of all the weaponry coming into Ukraine. Unfortunately, I am making a rhetorical point and do not need an answer, especially from the Russian Federation. That requires feeling some kind of responsibility.

Ukraine continues to be fully committed to peace and the Minsk agreements, and we urge the Russian Federation to do the same and to cease its persistent denials of its responsibility as a party to the conflict. We have just heard the Russian Federation's usual narrative, which really does have a devastating impact on the situation on the ground. The Russian shelling has resulted in many losses among military personnel and the civilian population. We are talking about hundreds of tanks, howitzers, and multiple rocket-launched grenades brought by Russia into the territory of Ukraine. And I do mean hundreds, most of which remain unaccounted for. They are often found camouflaged and hidden, kept ready for further violence.

The activities of the Russian occupation authorities are already causing an ecological disaster in Donbas. The shootings carried out by Russia in the vicinity of the Donetsk water-filtration station have rendered this critical infrastructure facility totally inoperable. The occupation administration's plans to shut off the pumps at the Yenakom mine, a site of Soviet nuclear tests in 1979, risk radioactive contamination of drinking water. Russia has even failed to provide the security guarantees necessary for repairing and maintaining critical civilian infrastructure along the line of contact.

The Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is dealing with severe restrictions on its freedom of movement by Russia's military forces and their proxies. The intimidation of observers is now totally normal and takes place on an almost daily basis with no reaction either from Moscow or its occupation administration. In a nutshell, we can see that Russia and its ongoing military activity in the occupied territories remain a fundamental obstacle to any sort of peaceful option.

As soon as Moscow decides to stop the violence — and so far there has been no such decision — the conflict will end. I urge Russia to take that decision. One of the most important steps it can take is supporting the deployment of a full-fledged United Nations-mandated peacekeeping force throughout the occupied territory of Donetsk and Luhansk. We are confident that such an operation could contribute a great deal to establishing security, creating the conditions necessary for real progress on the implementation of the Minsk agreements, taking over responsibility on the ground and saving people's lives. That will open the way for progress in implementing further steps under the Minsk agreement, and of course in organizing and holding local elections, which we definitely need. We have sent this message before, loudly and clearly, and I would like to reinforce it today, on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, which was in fact introduced at the initiative of Ukraine.

We stand for the full integration of the entirety of our Donbas, and we will welcome our compatriots back. In December 2017, my Government approved the State programme for post-conflict recovery in the country's eastern regions for the next three years. It focuses on boosting social and economic development in the conflict-affected areas, improving well-being and restoring normal life for the people who have suffered under the Russian occupation for the past four years. Naturally, in all this Ukraine is very grateful for the humanitarian assistance provided by agencies of the United Nations and bilateral partners. The 2018 United Nations humanitarian response plan will be even more instrumental in effectively addressing the needs of millions of those affected by the conflict in Donbas. If fully funded, it would help to make a substantial difference for at least 2.3 million people.

In addition to highlighting the situation in the occupied territories of Donbas, it is really important that we maintain a special focus on Russia's occupation of Crimea. The Russian Federation's actions there constitute the most flagrant breaches of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations since the Second World War. They challenge the norms and rules of international law and create an atmosphere of fear and hatred. The occupation has resulted in the accelerated militarization of Crimea. Russia has more than doubled the strength of its military there and continues to prepare the Crimean military infrastructure for the deployment of nuclear weapons, including by refurbishing Soviet-era nuclear-warhead storage facilities. Today, in fact, Crimea is a huge military base that is often used for Russian interventions in distant lands, including Syria. The Syrian regime has returned the favour by sending a delegation to Crimea and by recognizing Georgian

Abkhazia and South Ossetia, occupied by Russia, as independent republics.

The occupation continues to be characterized by violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, the total suppression of any opposition and the systematic persecution of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians — anyone who is against the occupation, basically — along with killings and forced disappearances, intimidation and attacks on Crimean Tatars and on Ukrainian identity and culture. Political prisoners are now a sad reality in Russian-occupied Crimea, as well as in Russia itself, as a matter of fact. My courageous compatriots are now fighting for their lives as well as for freedom and justice. On 14 May, Oleg Sentsov, a famous film director who has been thrown behind bars in Russia for opposing the illegal annexation of Crimea, addressed these very simple words to the people of Ukraine.

> "I, Oleg Sentsov, citizen of Ukraine, illegally sentenced by a Russian court and currently in prison in the city of Labytnangi, am declaring an indefinite hunger strike as of 14 Mary 2018. The only condition for its termination is the liberation of all Ukrainian political prisoners in the territory of the Russian Federation."

He added that he is ready to die for the freedom of those of his compatriots who have been illegally detained and sentenced in Russia. Vladimir Balukh, a political prisoner in Russian-occupied Crimea, has been on an indefinite hunger strike since 19 March in protest of his sentence on fake charges. The real reason for his prosecution is simply his pro-Ukrainian stance and the Ukrainian flag he flew in his private yard.

Emir Usein Kuku, Nariman Memediminov, Seyran Mustafayev, Edem Semedlyaev, Yassir Arbelaev and many other Crimean Tatars have become special targets for repression by the occupying authorities. They now need the support of all those who value freedom and human rights. I would like to take advantage of this important opportunity to urge Council members and the wider United Nations community to join our call to Russia to free them. Russia continues to ignore the order that the International Court of Justice issued one year ago requiring it, among other things, to refrain from maintaining or imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to preserve its representative institutions, including the Mejlis, as well as to ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language. Despite the order's very clear wording, an entire year has passed in which Russia has continued its ban on the Mejlis and its disregard for all of the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions on Crimea.

This is all about denying access for international human rights monitoring missions, showing the utmost contempt for its obligations under international law as the occupying Power and continuing the practice of compelling Crimean residents to serve in the armed forces of the Russian Federation. These are examples of Russia's response to the demands of international community. And the list of violations is practically endless. Just two weeks ago, on 15 May, Russia opened a bridge across the Kerch Strait. We strongly condemn its action and consider it yet another violation of our sovereignty. Ukraine is grateful to the countries that have already denounced this attempt to cement the illegal occupation of Crimea. We urge all other States and organizations, including the United Nations, to support that position.

Russia is also trying to change the demographics of the peninsula. Since the occupation began the occupying Power has intentionally brought in a huge number of settlers. It has introduced settlers from a number of different regions and created intolerable conditions for the local population in an attempt to force them to leave. I want to remind the Russian delegation that this practice is a clear violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention. Time and again we have urged the Russian Federation to reverse its illegal occupation of Crimea and to stop its aggression, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements. Until that is done, the issue of Russian aggression should remain a high priority on the Council's agenda.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my gratitude for the messages of solidarity with Ukraine expressed during this debate.

There is one more item that I should mention and that the Russian delegate has also brought up. We have just received tragic news from Kyiv. Arkady Babchenko, a Russian journalist and a well-known opponent of the Russian regime, has been killed near his apartment in Kyiv. Before arriving in Ukraine, he was compelled to leave Russia following attacks and threats against him and his family. He went to Prague and after that

to Kyiv. He continued to struggle for a democratic Russia from Ukraine. Of course, Moscow has always considered him to be an enemy. Our police have already begun an investigation. It is too early to say who is behind the attack, but with our knowledge of similar cases, we have strong reason to believe that Russia is willing to employ this and other tactics to destabilize Ukraine through acts of terrorism, subversion and political assassination.

I would like to thank everyone once again for their support and solidarity with Ukraine. It pains me to speak of this issue, which is such a matter of life and death for many of my fellow Ukrainians. There is nothing I would have wanted more than to be able to tell the Council that we reached a resolution to the conflict. But since an end is unfortunately nowhere near in sight, we will spare no effort to ensure that justice is served and that the Russian State bears full responsibility for its aggression and withdraws from all occupied territory, both in Donbas and Crimea.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be very brief. As I said today, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister has already hinted at the version that it will put out about the murder of the unfortunate journalist Arkady Babchenko. I believe that Ukraine's justice system, whose value we are familiar with, will no doubt discover a trail leading to Russia, as we promised the Council today.

Secondly, I mentioned Crimea, or rather the Minister mentioned Crimea just now. I am touched by his concern for Crimea and the suffering of the people there. I have a piece of advice for him. He should not worry about them; they are quite happy. And today we are discussing Ukraine, not Crimea. Crimea is part of Russia. It is time to accept that fact and proceed accordingly.

I want to say that I grieve for all who have died in this senseless conflict, including Darya Kazemirova, whose picture we just saw. I grieve for the soldiers of the Ukrainian army who have died as cannon fodder in this senseless conflict. And I grieve for all Ukrainians who have perished there, including those who have sadly died in Donbas, victims of Ukrainian weapons. There are many people who have suffered a fate similar to Darya Kazemirova's, as the Minister well knows. He should not forget to bring their pictures for the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.